

Beyond High School: Exploring Vocational Education and Other Training Opportunities for Students with Disabilities

Students and their families look forward to graduation from high school and the possibilities the future holds. The shift to adulthood doesn't magically happen following the commencement ceremony. Careful planning takes place prior to graduation to ensure a successful transition. Starting at the age of 16 years, the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) addresses his/her vocational interests.

Individualized Education Program

A coordinated team of educators, service providers and agencies assist the student and his/her family to explore training opportunities. The student's needs are assessed and team members assume a variety of roles to help the student reach his/her goals. Post-secondary education, vocational training, employment options, adult social services, independent living skills, financial planning, and community participation are all transition topics the team considers.

Vocational Education

The IEP addresses individual strengths and needs. Academic classes, work place skills aligned with the Arizona Standards, vocational programs, and job training experiences tailored to his/her needs help the student prepare for the transition to adulthood. Vocational education - education

for employment - is critical for the student who wants to enter the work force following high school. Career exploration, decision making, learning appropriate ways of interacting in social and work situations, finding and maintaining employment, and learning self-advocacy skills should be a part of the program. Services may start during high school and continue after graduation. That's why it is crucial for the IEP team to involve agency representatives who can offer support services beyond high school.

Employment

Vocational options range from competitive jobs to supported employment environments. As needed, services offered by Vocational Rehabilitation may include; evaluation, help finding employment, job skills training, disability specific modifications, assistive technology, and access to additional resources. Individuals with disabilities may also be eligible for services from the Division of Developmental Disabilities or financial assistance from the Social Security Administration.

Community Participation

High school activities and community programs prepare the special education student for inclusion in adult social pastimes. Students should be included in extracurricular sports and clubs. They may also be interested in participating in city recreation programs to foster interest in other activities and to form new friendships.

Young adults with a variety of hobbies and special interests, including independent and group involvement in sports, clubs and civic activities, tend to be more satisfied with their transition after high school.

Independent Living Skills

Include independent living skills in the transition planning process. The student should be trained to the best of his/her ability to manage personal care, income and finances, transportation needs, medical care and living arrangements. Some students will be capable of living independently. Other students may need assistance. In any case, the student with a disability should have options and assistance to reach his/her full potential. IEP team participants can use their knowledge and resources to make transition from high school to adulthood as meaningful and successful as possible.

Organizations

Arc of Arizona, The
5610 S. Central Ave.
Phoenix, AZ 85040
602-243-1787, 800-252-9054
www.arcarizona.org

* guardianship and self-advocacy services

AZ Bridge to Independent Living/ABIL
1229 E. Washington St.
Phoenix, AZ 85034-1101
602-256-2245, 800-280-2245 V/TTY
www.abil.org

* independent living services

Arizona Center for Disability Law
3839 N. Third Street, Suite 209
Phoenix, AZ 85012
V/TTY: 602-274-6287, 800-927-2260, *or*
100 N. Stone Ave., Suite 305
Tucson, AZ 85716
V/TTY: 520-327-9547, 800-922-1447
www.acdl.com/

* printed resources, advocacy services

Arizona Department of Education, ESS,
Transition Services
1535 W. Jefferson
Phoenix, AZ 85007
602-364-4026, 800-352-4558
www.ade.az.gov/ess/transitionservices
* resources and training information

Beach Center on Disability
University of Kansas
Haworth Hall
1200 Sunnyside Ave., Room 3136
Lawrence, KS 66045
785-864-7600
* transition and self-determination resources

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC),
Division on Career Development and
Transition
1110 North Glebe Road, Suite 300,
Arlington, VA 22201
703/620-3660
www.dcdt.org
* resources and training information

DES/Division of Developmental Disabilities
1789 W. Jefferson
Phoenix, AZ 85007
602-542-0419, 866-229-5553
www.de.state.az.us/ddd/
* statewide case management

Goodwill Industries

Central AZ, www.goodwillcentralaz.org
1091 S. 4th Ave.
Yuma, AZ 85364
928-329-0173

Northern AZ

2225 N. Steves Blvd.
Mail to: P.O. Box 1060
Flagstaff, AZ 86002-1060
928-526-9188

Southern AZ

1940 E. Silverlake Road, Suite 405
Tucson, AZ 85713-4872
520-623-5174

* employment training services

Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities

3839 N. Third Street, Suite 306
Phoenix, Arizona 85012
602-277-4986, 602-277-4949 (TTY),
866-771-9378

www.de.state.az.us/gcdd

* information and referral, advocacy

Heath Resource Center, National Clearinghouse on Post Secondary Education for Individuals with Disabilities

George Washington University
2121 K Street, N.W., Suite 220
Washington, DC 20037
800-544-32

www.heath.gwu.edu/Inteldisabilities.htm

* information and referral, advocacy

National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, Institute on Community Integration

University of Minnesota
6 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE
Minneapolis MN 55455
612-624-2097

www.ncset.org

* information and referral, advocacy

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY)

P.O. Box 1492
Washington, DC 20013
800-695-0285

www.nichcy.org

* printed resources

New Horizons Independent Living Center

8085 E. Manley Dr., Suite 1
Prescott Valley, AZ 86314
928-772-1266

www.newhorizonsilc.org

* regional information and training centers

Rehabilitation Services Administration

602-542-7878, 800-563-1221

www.de.state.az.us/ras/

* statewide vocational services

Parent Information Network, ADE/ESS

1535 W. Jefferson, Bin # 24
Phoenix, AZ 85007
602-542-3852, 800-352-4558

www.ade.az.gov/ess/pinspals/

* resources and training information

Raising Special Kids

2400 N. Central Ave., Suite 200
Phoenix, AZ 85004
602-242-4366, 800-237-3007

www.raisingpecialkids.org/

* books, videos, workshops

TASH, Equity, Opportunity and Inclusion for People with Disabilities

29 W. Susquehanna Ave., Suite 210
Baltimore, MD 21204
410-828-8274

www.tash.org or www.arizonatash.org

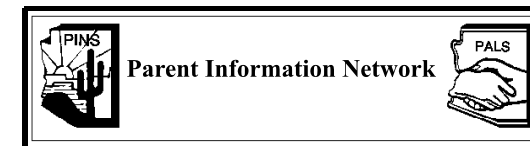
* resources

United States Office of Personnel Management, Federal Employment of People with Disabilities

www.opm.gov/disability/aboutus.asp

* hiring information for employers

Trade schools listed in your local directory
may also be of interest to students.



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